



# SCOTT FITZGERALD

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR  
SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

July 5, 2015

To the Southern Wisconsin Area Principals,

Thank you for reaching out to the legislature with your concerns over the recent passage of the biennial state budget. While I appreciate the input of school administrators from our district and throughout the state, I disagree with the characterizations made in regards to the education policies of this budget and recent legislative sessions. Since the passage of Act 10, our reforms have not only resulted in over \$3 billion in savings, but have allowed more flexibility for school boards, and more money per pupil.

Within the 13<sup>th</sup> Senate District, the combined total general equalization aid and per pupil categorical aid increased by 5.9% in the 2014-15 school year, while school districts statewide saw increases of \$85 million in general state aid over the previous year, as well as the additional \$127 million appropriated for per pupil categorical aid. The most recent budget continues to fully fund our schools and actually increases state support for K-12 education by more than \$300 million over the biennium.

Further, our reforms have focused on broadening the range of educational opportunities that are available for our children. We increased funding for the second consecutive budget for high cost transportation aid—helping to make schools more accessible for rural districts—and allowed more licensing flexibility to assist these areas in securing high quality educators. We increased special education aid to public schools and created a special needs voucher program, as well as modified open enrollment to protect special needs students from being denied participation. We expanded school choice statewide in order to afford low income parents more flexibility in selecting the best place to educate their children, and ensure that every child has access to a quality education—regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Finally, by prohibiting the State Superintendent from requiring a school board to adopt or implement academic standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative, we have put more of the power over education decision-making back in the hands of parents and their locally elected school board representatives. This, as well as other common-sense reforms such as modifying the school report card and requiring schools to notify parents of the adoption of academic standards, will help to ensure that schools are accountable to both the taxpayers and the parents of children they are educating.

Again, we thank you for your collaboration in reaching out to the legislature to share your perspective. We especially thank those who reached out to us during the process of crafting the state budget, and hope that you will continue to share your thoughts and concerns through this and future legislative sessions.

Sincerely,

Scott Fitzgerald  
13th Senate District

STATE CAPITOL

P.O. Box 7882 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53707-7882 • [SEN.FITZGERALD@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV](mailto:SEN.FITZGERALD@LEGIS.WISCONSIN.GOV)  
TELEPHONE: (608) 266-5660